

## Welcome to the 2023 BBC Proms



A very warm welcome to the 2023 BBC Proms. It's thrilling to be sharing in an experience in which tradition and innovation sit side by side, and I hope these concerts continue to delight you with familiar favourites and entice you to discover new composers and artists.

Our composer celebrations reflect both sides of that coin, from the works of Sergey Rachmaninov (born 150 years ago) – whose music has featured regularly at the Proms since 1900 – to the less familiar worlds of Dora Pejačević and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. This summer's extensive opera and choral programme brings you landmark operas by Berlioz and Poulenc alongside the UK premiere of György Kurtág's Beckett-inspired *Endgame* and the first complete performance at the Proms of Schumann's ravishing *Das Paradies und die Peri*. Opera also forms part of our family offering this year, with the *Horrible Histories* team taking an irreverent look at the art form, while a bank holiday concert delves into fantasy, myths and legends from TV, film and video games. And, following our series last year of 'Proms at' chamber music Proms around the UK, this year there are performances by leading soloists, ensembles and chamber choirs in Aberystwyth, Dewsbury, Gateshead, Perth and Truro.

The Proms celebrates genres and artists from around the world. This year we bring Portuguese fado and Northern Soul to the Proms for the first time, as well as a tribute to Bollywood playback singer Lata Mangeshkar. We also welcome four very individual artists in special orchestral collaborations – Rufus Wainwright with the BBC Concert Orchestra, Cory Henry with the Jules Buckley Orchestra, Jon Hopkins with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and – as part of our weekend at Sage Gateshead – Self Esteem with the Royal Northern Sinfonia. Visitors from further afield include orchestras from Berlin, Budapest and Boston. The Proms continues to redefine the boundaries of a classical music festival but one thing remains constant – we seek out and showcase the very best.

Every Prom here at the Royal Albert Hall and in our 'Proms at' series is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, where the station's expert engineers and presenters bring you the live experience wherever you are – and you can listen again on BBC Sounds. You can also enjoy 24 Proms on BBC TV, all available for 12 months on BBC iPlayer.

**David Pickard**  
Director, BBC Proms

## Tonight at the Proms

Tonight the Chineke! Orchestra returns to the Proms under the baton of American conductor Anthony Parnther. They bring with them two Proms staples: Beethoven's slender, Classically orientated Fourth Symphony, written at the height of the composer's fame, and Haydn's exuberant Trumpet Concerto, featuring Aaron Azunda Akugbo – a regular member of the orchestra – as soloist.

As part of its mission to champion and celebrate diversity in classical music, Chineke! also performs music by pioneering Black British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, his American namesake Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson and the contemporary composer Valerie Coleman, whose pandemic anthem *Seven O'Clock Shout* recalls the clanging of pots and pans heard in cities around the world during the Covid-19 lockdowns.



Because every Prom is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 ... Please silence your mobile phones, watch alarms and other electronic devices.

Please be considerate to the performers and other audience members, while also recognising that listeners may show a variety of responses to the music.



### Royal Albert Hall

If you leave the auditorium during the performance, you will only be readmitted when there is a suitable break in the music.



Please do not take photos, or record any audio or video during the performance

# Prom 61

FRIDAY 1 SEPTEMBER • 7.30pm–c9.45pm



**Valerie Coleman** Seven O’Clock Shout 6’

**Samuel Coleridge-Taylor** Four Novelletten 21’

*first performance at the Proms*

**Joseph Haydn** Trumpet Concerto in E flat major 16’

INTERVAL: 20 minutes

**Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson** Sinfonietta No. 1 – Rondo 7’

*first performance at the Proms*

**Ludwig van Beethoven** Symphony No. 4 in B flat major 34’

**Aaron Azunda Akugbo** *trumpet*

**Chineke! Orchestra** Juan Manuel González Hernández *leader*

**Anthony Parnter** *conductor*

**RADIO 3** **FOUR** **SOUNDS** **iPLAYER**

This concert is broadcast live by BBC Radio 3 and shown on BBC Four at 8.00pm. You can listen on BBC Sounds, and watch on BBC iPlayer for 12 months.

**VALERIE COLEMAN** (born 1970)

## Seven O'Clock Shout (2020)

*Seven O'Clock Shout* is an anthem inspired by frontline workers during the Covid pandemic, and the heart-warming ritual of the evening serenades that brought people together amid isolation to celebrate life and the sacrifices of heroes.

The work begins with a distant and solitary solo between two trumpets in fanfare fashion to commemorate the isolation forced upon humankind and the need to reach out to one another. The fanfare blossoms into a lushly dense landscape of nature, symbolising the care-giving acts of nurses and doctors as they try to save lives, while nature transforms and heals herself during a time of self-isolation. Clarinet and flute solos provide a transition into a new, upbeat segment. Later, a piccolo solo dances with joy.

Ostinato patterns are laid down by the bass section, over which the cor anglais and strings float, gradually building up to that moment at 7.00pm when shouts, cheers, claps and the clanging of pots and pans rang



A New York City resident bangs an empty pot from a high-rise balcony; the ritual, performed every evening by millions of people during the Covid-19 lockdowns, was the inspiration for Coleman's *Seven O'Clock Shout*

through the air of cities around the world. Trumpets and claves drive an infectious rhythm, while a solo trombone boldly rings out an anthem in a traditional African call-and-response style. The entire orchestra ‘shouts’ back in response and the ensemble rallies into an anthem that embodies the struggles and triumph of humanity.

The work ends in a proud anthem moment where we all come together with grateful hearts to acknowledge that we have survived yet another day.

*Programme note © Valerie Coleman*

## PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

At the Barbican Hall last February Gemma New and the BBC Symphony Orchestra gave the UK premiere of the composer’s breakthrough piece, *Umoja (Anthem of Unity)*, in its expanded orchestral version. However, this is the first time her music has featured at a Prom.

© David Gutman

David Gutman is a writer and critic who since 1996 has contributed extensively to the BBC Proms programmes. His books cover subjects as wide-ranging as Prokofiev and David Bowie, and he reviews for *Gramophone* and *Classical Source*.

Delve into Proms history for yourself by searching the online database of all Proms performances at [bbc.co.uk/proms/archive](http://bbc.co.uk/proms/archive).

## VALERIE COLEMAN



‘When you’re starting to write for yourself and you know what you want to hear, and you know what you want to play, and you know what sits well on the instrument, those things start to really impact,’ Valerie Coleman explained in a 2020 interview. By working

regularly with an ensemble, she added, ‘you learn both orchestration, and also how to write in a way that allows for a musician to buy into your musical idea and make it their own.’

Born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, Coleman made her first impression on the musical world as a performer. She began her training as a flautist at the age of 11 and in 1996 set in motion the formation of a group that would bring her global renown: Imani Winds, a quintet named for the Swahili word for faith, whose members were all of Black and Latin heritage. The ensemble – from which Coleman retired in 2018 to concentrate on family, advocacy and pedagogy – provided hands-on experience for dozens of composers from under-represented communities, Coleman included.

Also a composer from a young age, Coleman had graduated to writing symphonies by her teenage years. She studied with Randall Woolf and Martin Amlin, and earned a double degree in Theory/Composition and Performance at Boston University. Skilled at writing works that are gratifying for performers and audiences alike, she established a style that fused the lyrical clarity and bold

swagger characteristic of so much American music with elements of jazz, African and Latin American idioms.

As resident composer with Imani Winds, Coleman created her first universally successful composition for the group in 2001: *Umoja*, which had begun as a 1997 work for women's choir. She subsequently arranged the piece for a variety of other ensembles, and in 2019 the Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned and premiered an expanded orchestral realisation, *Umoja (Anthem of Unity)*.

That notable occasion – the first time the ensemble had performed a classical work by a living African American female composer – initiated an enduring and fruitful association that has continued with *Seven O'Clock Shout* (2020), honouring healthcare professionals and essential workers who saved and sustained lives during the Covid-19 pandemic, and her setting of Sonia Sanchez's poem *This Is Not a Small Voice*. That work's confident vocal lines and colourful orchestral writing augur well for Coleman's present engagement in the Metropolitan Opera/Lincoln Center Theater New Works commissioning programme.

*Profile* © Steve Smith

Steve Smith is a journalist, critic and editor based in New York City. He has written about music for *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*, and served as an editor for *The Boston Globe*, *Time Out New York* and *NPR*.

“It opens with cautious trumpet fanfares that activate tremulous strings. The music goes through passages of jittery riffs, burnished string chords, elegiac quietude and eruptive restlessness – complete with actual shouts and claps from the players. The piece at times has a Copland-esque glow, but Coleman adds tart harmonic tweaks and assertive syncopations that continually surprise.”

A 2021 review of Coleman's *Seven O'Clock Shout* in *The New York Times*

**SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR**

(1875–1912)

# Four Novelletten for string orchestra, Op. 52 (1901–2)

*first performance at the Proms*

- 1 **Allegro moderato**
- 2 **Larghetto**
- 3 **Valse: Andante con moto**
- 4 **Allegro molto**

The violin was, perhaps, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's first love. He started learning the instrument at the age of 5 and pursued it further at the Royal College of Music. Such was his talent that he became a violin instructor at the (now closed) Croydon Conservatoire while still a student at the College. Even though Coleridge-Taylor's professional career as a conductor and composer superseded his path as a performer, string instruments remained at the heart of his craft. From the pioneering Maud Powell, dedicatee of his Violin Concerto in G minor (heard earlier this season at the Proms), to the prolific Royal



Ethel Barns (1873–1948), the violinist and composer to whom Coleridge-Taylor dedicated his *Four Novelletten*; Barns studied at the Royal Academy of Music, having enrolled aged just 13, and was later an active member of the Society of Women Musicians along with composers Ethel Smyth and Rebecca Clarke

Academy of Music alumna Ethel Barns, for whom he composed his *Four Novelletten*, Coleridge-Taylor embraced opportunities to showcase the instrument and the instrumentalists that he so admired.

Coleridge-Taylor composed the *Novelletten*, a four-movement suite for string orchestra, tambourine and triangle, between 1901 and 1902. By this time, he was director of the Orchestral Society of the Croydon Conservatoire, which likely premiered the piece. Building on a term thought to be introduced by Robert Schumann, each movement, as the title's etymology suggests, tells a short story. Their non-specific nature, however, gives listeners the freedom to run with their imaginations.

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The Allegro molto that opens the suite evokes a tarantella (an Italian dance type) with its triple-time signature, whirling figurations and shimmering tambourine rhythms. A particularly lyrical moment to listen out for is in the middle of this ternary form (A–B–A) movement, where the viola and cello combine their velvet tones into a single melody.

The Larghetto is also in ternary form. The framing sections evoke two dancers taking cautious, measured steps around one another; but, as the key and time signatures change, these tentative movements transform into sweeping gestures that seem to forget the world around them.

The Valse (Waltz) is the only movement explicitly named after a dance although, ironically, it is the least danceable part of the suite. Instead, Coleridge-Taylor's special love for the violin comes to the fore, with heart-aching solos enveloped in warm harmonies and lush textures.

Finally, the Allegro molto draws the suite to a vibrant and gallant close.

*Programme note © Samantha Ege*

Samantha Ege is a musicologist and concert pianist, as well as a Research Fellow at the University of Southampton. She is the author of the forthcoming *South Side Impresarios: How Race Women Transformed Chicago's Classical Music Scene*. She has recorded several albums, featuring piano music by Florence Price, Margaret Bonds and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Her next album highlights piano concertos by women who composed in the 19th and 20th centuries.

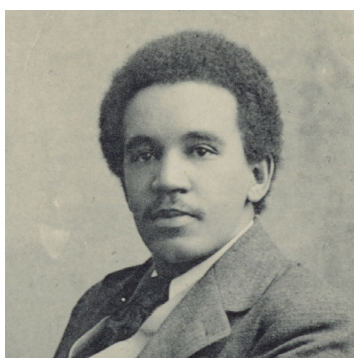
## PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Long before vanishing from the lists, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor had become a one-work composer here as elsewhere, remembered solely – if at all – by vocal and instrumental highlights from *The Song of Hiawatha*. More recently, in 2005, his reputation was boosted when the Violin Concerto in G minor, given its London premiere by Arthur Catterall at a 1912 Prom, was at last reprised by Philippe Graffin. We heard it again earlier this season, when the soloist was former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist Elena Urioste. A reassessment has been gathering pace. In 2021 Kalena Bovell and the Chineke! Orchestra revived two original works: *The Song of Hiawatha* overture, last aired here in 1959, and the Symphony No. 1 in A minor, mostly written when Coleridge-Taylor was a student over the road at the Royal College of Music. The *Novelletten*, one of six scores scheduled in 2023, would seem to be new to these concerts.

© David Gutman



## SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR



The son of a white English mother and a medical doctor from Sierra Leone who had come to the UK to study, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was, simply put, a child prodigy. At the tender age of 15, he began studying violin and later composition at the

Royal College of Music in London, where he quickly established a reputation for himself as a promising talent. While there, he became part of a generation of English composers known for their romantic national style, such as Edward Elgar and Coleridge-Taylor's classmates, Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

While his compositional techniques are indeed indebted to the emerging English national style of the late 19th century, the melodies and emotional core of his works come from his Black heritage. As someone who had to endure racism his entire life, he found refuge in Black diasporic poetry, culture and the arts. His lifelong friendship with the African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar inspired many of his art songs, and he set many of Dunbar's own poems to music. It is no surprise, either, to discover that Coleridge-Taylor attended the first-ever Pan-African Congress dedicated to supporting African independence and Black self-determination around the world, which took place in London in 1900 – or that he was the youngest attendee, to boot. The more that Coleridge-Taylor turned to the music of the Black diaspora for inspiration, the more he established himself as a formidable composer capable

of deep, lyrical expression. He took classic African American spirituals – including 'Deep River' – and gave them stunning instrumental arrangements that still enthral listeners today.

The musical work that made Coleridge-Taylor a wildly popular composer – *The Song of Hiawatha*, a trilogy of cantatas composed between 1898 and 1900 – is also at the centre of a tragic story revealing the shortcomings of copyright and publishing in early 20th-century Britain. Much to the composer's surprise, the first part of this trilogy, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, sold hundreds of thousands of copies. From 1928 until the outbreak of the Second World War, the Royal Albert Hall staged it every year for two weeks – replete with costumes, scenery and sets. Thousands came to hear it, including the royal family. But, because Coleridge-Taylor, like many other composers at the time, had sold the rights to the work for a one-off fee (in this case just 15 guineas), he and his family saw little financial reward for its success. This injustice later became the impetus for sweeping changes in British copyright laws.

*Introduction* © Kira Thurman

Kira Thurman is a cultural historian and musicologist at the University of Michigan. Her writings focus on the history of Black musicians in Europe and the USA. She is the author of *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms* (Cornell University Press, 2021).

### MORE COLERIDGE-TAYLOR AT THE PROMS

SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER, 7.00pm • PROM 71  
**Deep River (arr. S. Parkin)**

For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit [bbc.co.uk/proms](http://bbc.co.uk/proms).

**JOSEPH HAYDN** (1732–1809)

# Trumpet Concerto in E flat major (1796)

- 1 Allegro (*cadenza: Aaron Azunda Akugbo*)
- 2 Andante
- 3 Allegro

Aaron Azunda Akugbo *trumpet*

Concertos never really held the fascination for Haydn that they did for Mozart. Mozart was a virtuoso pianist and a pretty good violinist, but Haydn, by his own admission, was not a great performer on any instrument, and it is hardly surprising that he failed to make quite as significant a contribution to the genre's development as his younger contemporary and friend.

But, while Haydn's concertos may not display the forward-looking originality and character of his symphonies and string quartets, they still bear eloquent witness



Let the games begin: 456 *Squid Game* contestants gather in their giant dormitory, having been awoken to the third movement of Haydn's Trumpet Concerto; the choice of music is thought to be a reference to another (less gruesome) South Korean television show, *Janghak Quiz*, which also featured Haydn's concerto

to his compositional skill and workmanship, and in certain cases reach a level of inspiration that few of his contemporaries could match. Nowhere is this more true than in his delightful last concerto, composed for that instrument relatively rarely encountered in a solo role: the trumpet. Dating from 1796, it was written for Anton Weidinger, a trumpeter in the Viennese court orchestra. In Haydn's day, brass instruments such as the trumpet or horn were 'natural' in the sense that, without modern valve mechanisms, they were restricted to a limited range of notes. Weidinger, however, had developed a new type of trumpet in which a system of holes and keys allowed every note to be played throughout the register, and it was for this instrument, christened by Weidinger the *organisierte Trompete* ('organised trumpet'), that Haydn composed his concerto.

Weidinger performed it for the first time at a concert in Vienna's Burgtheater on 22 March 1800 – the long gap between composition and premiere being an indication, perhaps, of the difficulties involved in getting to grips with the new instrument – but after that the concerto seems to have been forgotten until it was published for the first time in 1929. Since then it has held a regular place in the repertoire and has become the most popular concerto for the keyed trumpet's successor, the modern valved trumpet.

The potential of Weidinger's new invention was not lost on Haydn. Naturally, he made full use of the increased range of notes now available to him, but he also recognised the changes that had been made to the instrument's character, introducing a touch of poetry which few at the time can have thought possible in trumpet music. This novel approach is evident right from the start of the first movement: polished and urbane, its delicate scoring and elegant interplay between soloist and orchestra are a world away from

the militaristic sound of the conventional trumpet of the day (although Haydn does not ignore this aspect entirely).

The slow movement is even more revelatory, displaying the lyrical and chromatic qualities of the new instrument in a lilting and expressive *Andante* which also enjoys the freedom to wander adventurously into some distant keys.

The finale is a cheerful rondo with an irresistible returning theme, and is full of the wit and charm typical of its composer.

*Programme note* © Lindsay Kemp

Lindsay Kemp was for 30 years a producer for BBC Radio 3. He is Artistic Director of Baroque at the Edge and a regular contributor to *Gramophone*.

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## PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

The two most recent complete performances of this work took place amid Last Night festivities. Joining the BBC Symphony Orchestra were Håkan Hardenberger in 1990 and Alison Balsom in 2009. More recently, in 2016, the finale alone featured in a pair of concerts associated with the BBC's Ten Pieces II education project; Matilda Lloyd was the soloist with Alpesh Chauhan and the BBC Philharmonic. George Eskdale, whose landmark recording of the concerto was made shortly before the Second World War, was the first to play it here, in 1945. His successors? William Lang (1959), Adolf Scherbaum (1962), Philip Jones (1968), John Wilbraham (1971) and, just a year later, David Mason, who in 1967 had taped the piccolo trumpet solo for The Beatles' 'Penny Lane'.

© David Gutman

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## PROMS Q&amp;A

# Aaron Azunda Akugbo

## trumpet

### This is going to be your Proms debut as a soloist, but you've already performed at the Proms, haven't you?

Yes – I was in the fortunate position of playing in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for three years from when I was 15, and we gave three Proms performances during that time. The first year, I was only trumpet number eight, or something like that, but it was still nerve-racking. But the next year I was Principal Trumpet, and we did Mahler's Ninth Symphony – but 16-year-old me was like: 'Yeah, sure, Mahler's Ninth, loads of trumpet solos, on radio and TV, that's cool.' I've also played in a couple of Proms as part of the Chineke! Orchestra, but this is the first time I'll be standing out at the front. It's really exciting, and it feels a bit strange as well.

### You're playing Haydn's Trumpet Concerto tonight – what's been your history with the piece?

I had an incredibly enthusiastic, ambitious trumpet teacher when I was at St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh, and that's where I first learnt it. It was the first real piece of trumpet repertoire that I performed, and it became a family favourite as well – my family isn't especially musical, but I remember my grandparents in particular used to love it. It's a funny piece, because on the page it looks incredibly simple, certainly compared with the kinds of trumpet pieces that were written in the 20th century. But the challenge is to take those quite simple notes from the page and turn them into music that people want to hear and find exciting. I performed it with the Chineke! Orchestra back in 2020, and I played it from memory, which is something I very rarely do. Now I feel like it's ingrained in me. I was told by a friend that I needed to come up with my own cadenza for the piece – nothing too weird and wacky, but something in keeping with the Classical style.

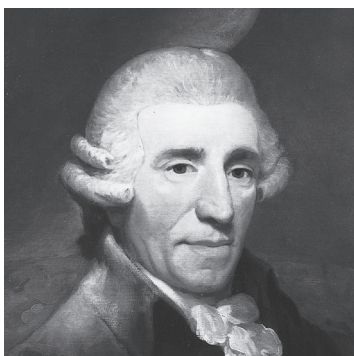


### You've had a similarly long connection with the Chineke! Orchestra, haven't you?

Yes – when I was moving down from Edinburgh to London to study at the Royal Academy of Music, even before my course started I got a call to take part in the orchestra's second ever performance. Seventeen-year-old me was sitting next to Billy Hunter, who's Principal Trumpet with the Metropolitan Opera. I was like: 'What on earth?' Then for a later project I was Principal Trumpet myself – that was my first ever professional Principal Trumpet experience. From there I did a couple of tours with the orchestra, and I recorded the Haydn Concerto with it for a behind-closed-doors concert during the Covid-19 pandemic. I remember, before the first time I went into the orchestra, I felt the same way that I think a lot of audiences do – that I'd just never seen a room of musicians who looked like me, or my family. But, within the first couple of days, it already felt like a family occasion. And we might all be there with different musical experiences, but we're all there with the same intentions.

*Interview by David Kettle*

## JOSEPH HAYDN



The son of a master wheelwright, Haydn was far from the naive countryman of popular imagination. Yet he is still the victim of the amiable persona he presented to the world, and of a life spent, from 1761, largely in tranquil seclusion as Esterházy Kapellmeister:

no scurrilous letters, no rebellion, no scandal or intrigue (the odd mistress was *de rigueur* in 18th-century court circles), no deathbed *Requiem*. Haydn's life, unlike Mozart's, has defied mythification.

Haydn wrote in his *Autobiographical Sketch* of 1776: 'My sole wish is to offend neither my neighbour, nor my gracious prince, nor above all our merciful God.' Modesty – twisted by the Romantics into a cringing meekness – love of order and a devout Catholic faith were instilled from early childhood. At least until the late 1780s, Haydn easily reconciled service to Prince Nikolaus Esterházy with an acute sense of his own creative worth. As he told his biographer Georg Griesinger: 'I could, as head of an orchestra, experiment ... I was set apart from the world ... so I couldn't help becoming original.'

The young Haydn had forged a reputation for the comic in his Opp. 1 and 2 string quartets. He remains arguably the composer most likely to provoke a smile or chuckle. Yet, if we hear only humour in Haydn, the loss is ours. Beginning with the epochal Op. 20 quartets (1772) and the symphonies numbered in the 40s, his mature instrumental works exploit the latent dramatic energy

of his musical material with a mingled freedom and logic that no contemporary composer could match. Not for nothing has composer Robin Holloway dubbed him 'music's supreme intellectual'.

By the early 1780s Haydn was an international celebrity, with publishers vying to acquire rights to his symphonies and quartets. Their combination of popular appeal and intricate argument reached its apogee in the 12 symphonies (Nos. 93–104) from his triumphant London visits of 1791–2 and 1794–5 and the string quartets of Opp. 76 (1796–7) and 77 (1799). These works, and his series of late piano trios, are among the marvels of civilised art, endlessly unpredictable in their strategies, breathtaking in their expressive range. The two late oratorios, *The Creation* (1796–8) and *The Seasons* (1799–1801), are monuments to the ideals of the Enlightenment. In them, and in parts of the six Masses of 1796–1802, Haydn's religious impulse is coloured by a Romantic sense of the sublime.

Perhaps this supremely companionable composer, rarely as straightforward as he seems and only 'naive' when it suits him, will never rival Mozart and Beethoven in popularity. Yet, in our fractured and neurotic age, Haydn's humane, life-affirming vision, expressed in mastery of the Classical sonata style that he did more than anyone to perfect, has a unique power to refresh and uplift the spirit.

*Profile* © Richard Wigmore

Richard Wigmore is a writer, broadcaster and lecturer specialising in the Viennese Classical period and in lieder. He has written *The Faber Pocket Guide to Haydn*.

## MORE HAYDN AT THE PROMS

SUNDAY, 2.00pm • PROMS AT PERTH\*  
String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 9 No. 2

\*at Perth Concert Hall, as part of the 'Proms at' Chamber Concerts  
For full Proms listings, and to book tickets, visit [bbc.co.uk/proms](http://bbc.co.uk/proms).

“We must remind our readers once again of the astonishment with which musicians in 1796 heard a trumpet playing in A flat major and in diatonic notes: the effect must have been so incredible as to suggest some kind of Satanic prestidigitation.”

Haydn scholar H. C. Robbins Landon  
on the Trumpet Concerto

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## INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

*Now playing on BBC Radio 3 ...*

Poet Yomi Sode, who has previously collaborated with the Chineke! Orchestra, joins Linton Stephens to discuss his writing and his interest in music.

*Available on BBC Sounds*



**COLERIDGE-TAYLOR PERKINSON** (1932–2004)

## Sinfonietta No. 1 for strings (1953) – Rondo

*first performance at the Proms*

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson composed his Sinfonietta No. 1 in the early 1950s. Having studied composition with Vittorio Giannini (whose other African American students later included Herbie Hancock and Adolphus Hailstork), Perkinson absorbed the neo-Classical influences of his renowned instructor. The First Sinfonietta, scored for string orchestra, is evidence of this: its three movements (Sonata Allegro; Song Form; Rondo) follow the fast–slow–fast pattern that became standardised in large-scale forms through the 18th century. It is a work that cites European traditions; but, as with a number of mid-century American composers, Perkinson’s writing simultaneously looks towards a new aesthetic.

Perkinson wrote this work in the dawning years of both the Civil Rights Movement and musical post-modernism. Composing at the intersection of these socio-political currents, his style reflected what the music historian Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr calls ‘Afro-modernism’ – an artistic response to the world as told from the vantage point of the Black creative.

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The Rondo third movement (marked *Allegro furioso*) bursts with passionate energy. An urgent, syncopated melody played by the violas establishes the theme, which returns

throughout, according to the conventions of rondo form. Violin tremolo patterns create an unrelenting drive and are further punctuated by dramatic motifs in the cello and double bass parts. The movement experiments with quick-changing time signatures but never strays too far from the rules of Western tonality. In fact, the contrasting episode heard after the opening theme relishes the melodious unison of the violins and cellos. Perkinson’s Afro-modernism is not all fire and fury: there are moments of tender lyricism and great optimism.

*Programme note © Samantha Ege*

“I cannot define Black music. I could say that it is a music that has its genesis in the Black psyche or the Black social life, but it is very difficult to say what Black music really is. There are kinds of Black music, just as there are kinds of other musics.”

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

## COLERIDGE-TAYLOR PERKINSON



What musical hopes might Vereda ‘Tosci’ Pearson have had for her son when she named him Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, after the British-born composer-conductor Samuel Coleridge-Taylor? Pearson herself was an active performer, teacher

and theatre director in the creative scenes of New York. Inspiring such an aspirational choice of name for her son, therefore, was her own passion for music alongside the knowledge that Samuel Coleridge-Taylor had influenced generations of African American composers. To gift her son such a name was to align him with this rich legacy.

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson was born in 1932 and grew up in New York. His formative years unfolded through the afterglow of the Harlem Renaissance, which witnessed the stratospheric rise of Black symphonic composers William Grant Still and William Levi Dawson. Perkinson, however, would come to represent a generational shift from the more conservative musical approaches of his predecessors to an experimental Afro-modernism that blurred musical borders.

Around the age of 11, Perkinson began to show a keen interest in music and subsequently studied at the High School of Music and Art in New York. There, his talents were recognised when he was awarded the LaGuardia Prize in Music. After high school, he enrolled at New York University in order to study English and pursue the path of a schoolteacher upon graduating. But this was

evidently not his calling because soon afterwards he transferred to the Manhattan School of Music, earning his Bachelor of Music degree in 1953 and Master of Music degree the following year.

Like his British namesake, Perkinson trained as both a composer and conductor, continuing the latter discipline at the Berkshire Music Center in Massachusetts, the Mozarteum in Salzburg and the Netherlands Radio Union in Hilversum. However, Perkinson also grew deeply interested in popular music, forming artistic connections with jazz drummer Max Roach, heart-throb of the silver screen Harry Belafonte and Motown legend Marvin Gaye – for whom Perkinson arranged the string and horn parts on the 1976 platinum-selling album *I Want You*.

Alongside composing for the concert hall, he also wrote for television, radio and film. Among his key works are tonight’s *Sinfonietta No. 1* for strings (1953), the *Viola Concerto* (1954), *A Warm December* (1962, used in the eponymous film, starring and directed by Sidney Poitier) and *Attitudes* (1962–3, written for the groundbreaking African American tenor George Shirley) – but this only touches the surface of his vast output. Unlike earlier generations of African American composers who felt torn between the highbrow and lowbrow divide of classical versus popular music, Perkinson embraced it all and channelled these kaleidoscopic influences in his compositions.

*Profile © Samantha Ege*



**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

(1770–1827)

**Symphony No. 4  
in B flat major,  
Op. 60 (1806)**

- 1 **Adagio – Allegro vivace**
- 2 **Adagio**
- 3 **Allegro vivace**
- 4 **Allegro ma non troppo**

Beethoven's Fourth Symphony comes from a highly productive period of his career. Aged 35 and living in Vienna, he was already acknowledged as one of Europe's leading composers, even as he reluctantly accepted that his ever-increasing deafness was incurable. He had suffered an emotional crisis resulting from his declining hearing in the summer of 1802, when he retreated to the nearby Austrian village of Heiligenstadt on the advice of his doctor.

Rather than ending his musical career, however, this crisis had given him a new sense of artistic purpose and saw his music move in a bold new direction, heralding the start of his so-called middle period. In a few short years he produced a string of



Głogów Castle in modern-day Poland, the former home of Count Franz von Oppersdorff: it was a visit here by Beethoven in 1806 that resulted in the commission of his Fourth Symphony

masterpieces, including the Third Symphony ('Eroica', 1803), the 'Waldstein' and 'Appassionata' Piano Sonatas (1803–5) and the 'Rasumovsky' String Quartets (1806).

The Fourth Symphony was the result of a commission from a wealthy music-lover, Count Franz von Oppersdorff, whose palace in Silesia (located within modern-day Poland and the Czech Republic) was near the ancestral home of Prince Karl Lichnowsky, one of Beethoven's most prominent supporters in Vienna. In the summer of 1806, the prince brought Beethoven with him to his Silesian estate, and at some point Lichnowsky and Beethoven were invited to a musical performance at Oppersdorff's palace. There they heard a performance of Beethoven's Second Symphony – an especially appropriate choice of programme, given that Lichnowsky was the work's dedicatee.

“The Fourth is closer to the expressive world of Beethoven's more Classically orientated Second Symphony than that of his more ambitious middle-period works. Schumann memorably compared it to 'a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants' – the giants of course being the mighty 'Eroica' and Fifth Symphonies.”

Although Oppersdorff evidently admired Beethoven's music, he is likely to have been most familiar with the composer's early works. He may not yet have heard the still-unpublished 'Eroica' Symphony, unless he had happened to be present at some of the early performances

in Vienna the previous year. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Fourth Symphony, which Beethoven composed in the autumn of 1806 in response to Oppersdorff's commission, is closer to the expressive world of his more Classically orientated Second Symphony than that of his more ambitious middle-period works. Robert Schumann memorably compared the Fourth to 'a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants' – the giants of course being the mighty 'Eroica' and Fifth Symphonies.

...

The Fourth Symphony opens quietly and mysteriously, with a single unison note plucked by the strings and held by the winds. This heralds a harmonically unstable slow introduction, not unlike the 'Representation of Chaos' that opens Haydn's *The Creation* (1797–8). The music builds in intensity and transitions seamlessly into the start of the main section of the movement – indeed, it is not immediately clear to the listener where the Adagio introduction stops and the boisterous Allegro vivace begins.

Another seamless transition occurs later in the movement, in one of the symphony's most innovative and striking moments. A hushed passage in the strings, accompanied by ominous drum rolls, settles on a remote harmony – an F sharp major seventh chord – before sliding almost imperceptibly back into the home key of B flat major. This is followed by a dramatic crescendo that eventually leads to the return of the main theme, effectively blurring the boundaries between the central development section and the moment of recapitulation.

The Adagio is one of Beethoven's most beautiful slow movements, with a long and lyrical melody of the kind found in many of his middle-period works. This melody is accompanied by a repeating two-note rhythmic figure

that is given increasing prominence as the movement progresses, its final appearance coming in the form of an unexpected *pianissimo* timpani solo at the very end of the movement.

The third movement takes the place of the traditional symphonic dance movement (indeed, it was erroneously entitled 'Menuetto' in the first printed edition), its lightning-fast main theme punctuated by striking syncopations. The mood is temporarily transformed in a lilting, dance-like Trio, which Beethoven presents twice within the movement.

The finale has a breathless main theme with constant running notes and is full of moments of humour and fun; occasional angry outbursts from the full orchestra are answered by light-hearted scampering in the strings.

*Programme note* © Erica Buurman

Erica Buurman is Director of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies and Assistant Professor in the School of Music and Dance at San José State University, California. She is the author of *The Viennese Ballroom in the Age of Beethoven* (CUP, 2022) and has appeared on BBC Radios 3 and 4. She is editor of *The Beethoven Journal* and *The Beethoven Newsletter*.

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## PREVIOUSLY AT THE PROMS

Beethoven's Fourth Symphony has been given regularly at the Proms since 1898, most often on a Friday night, the composer's once traditional slot. Indeed, the piece had been heard on more than 40 Fridays, always under the baton of Henry Wood, by the time Adrian Boult conducted it on a Thursday in 1942, its second airing during that wartime season. Some distinguished guests have presented it at the Royal Albert Hall in the past half-century. In a short-lived revival of the Proms Winter series Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic paired the Fourth and Fifth in January 1973. More recent exponents have included Daniel Barenboim with the Orchestre de Paris (1981) and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra (2012), Claudio Abbado and the Vienna Philharmonic (1984), Colin Davis and the Dresden Staatskapelle (1991) and Sir Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic (2010). The work was played at a 2018 afternoon Prom, with Joshua Bell directing the 40-odd players of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields from the leader's position, and in 2021 when the BBC Philharmonic's then Chief Conductor Omer Meir Wellber had to withdraw and Ben Gernon stepped in to direct a revised programme. Last season's rendition took place in a rare morning Prom in which Dinis Sousa and the Royal Northern Sinfonia complemented it with music by Haydn, Vaughan Williams and the late Kaija Saariaho. Tonight's orchestra and friends provided the traditional, essentially annual Proms performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in 2022, Kevin John Edusei conducting.

© David Gutman

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## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN



Ludwig van Beethoven was at the forefront of the major developments that took place in the musical world during his lifetime. He began his career in the employment of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne in Bonn at a time when professional music-making was primarily

cultivated within the courts of the European aristocracy. By the end of his life Beethoven had achieved great public success with works that posed unprecedented challenges for both performers and listeners, and lived as an independent artist – a status that was unimaginable for previous generations of musicians.

Beethoven moved from Bonn to Vienna at the age of almost 22, initially to study composition with Joseph Haydn (Mozart having died the previous year), and soon made his name as a virtuoso pianist and composer in all the major instrumental genres. A high point in his career was the public concert organised for his own benefit in December 1808, which included the premieres of his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and his Fourth Piano Concerto with himself as soloist.

Beethoven's performing career was cut short by the onset of deafness, which began when he was in his late twenties and grew increasingly severe until the end of his life, leading him to focus his creative energies on composition. His seriousness of purpose with regard to his art is demonstrated by his laborious process of composing: he could devote upwards of six months to a single symphony,

whereas Haydn sometimes produced six such works for a single season. His only opera, *Fidelio*, underwent two major revisions before achieving its final form in 1814, and his monumental *Missa solemnis* (completed in 1823) was the product of several years' work.

Much of Beethoven's music has remained in the core performing repertoire since the 19th century, particularly the 32 piano sonatas and the nine symphonies. Among his most influential and celebrated works are those in his so-called 'heroic' style, characterised by their expanded scale, an emphasis on thematic development and dramatic overall trajectory leading to a triumphant conclusion. Such works are mostly concentrated in Beethoven's middle period, exemplified by the odd-numbered symphonies from No. 3 (the 'Eroica', 1803) onwards, the *Egmont* overture and the Fifth Piano Concerto. Nevertheless, an immense variety of expression is found across Beethoven's works, from the lyrical and introspective, notably the 1816 song-cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* ('To the Distant Beloved'), to the comical and bombastic (as in the Symphony No. 8 of 1812). His late style grew increasingly esoteric, and works such as the five late string quartets (1824–6) appealed mainly to musical connoisseurs, being considered incomprehensible by some early listeners.

*Profile* © Erica Buurman



# The Proms Listening Service

As Radio 3's *The Listening Service* revisits earlier episodes reflecting some of this summer's Proms programming, presenter **Tom Service** takes a wide-angle view of the common themes in this weekly feature

## Week 7 Playing at Sight and from Memory

I blame Franz Liszt: he performed jaw-dropping piano recitals without a scrap of sheet music in front of him. Everything he performed – not only his own wildly imaginative fantasias on operatic hits of the day, but music by composers from Chopin to Beethoven – seemed to be conjured in a moment of inspiration. Liszt's magical musical memory turned his concerts into seances where his listeners were joined by the spirits of the musical past who were transmitted through him.

But Liszt's breathtaking innovation has become a learning-by-rote expectation for all of us in the audience, so that the magic trick of concerto soloists in telepathic communion with composers is now something we take for granted, at the Proms and elsewhere. In fact, it's more noteworthy when a soloist has the music in front of them rather than when they don't. The cliché is that, unless the musician has learnt their concertos off by heart – like Augustin Hadelich with Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and Aaron Azunda Akugbo with Haydn's Trumpet Concerto this week – they can't completely identify with the composer or the piece, and we're being short-changed in the audience. After all, if an actor were suddenly to produce the script of *Hamlet* during 'To be or not to be', we'd imagine they'd had a performance-ending memory lapse, or just hadn't learnt their lines.

Yet there's a weird double standard in concert life, when you compare it to the theatre. Orchestral players routinely use sheet music, reading the notes without having to memorise

the whole of Mahler's Ninth Symphony or Rachmaninov's Symphony No. 3 (both also this week). And it's not that these musicians don't know the pieces, it's just that we don't mind that they haven't committed the whole thing to memory.

Unless we're talking about the Aurora Orchestra, that is, whose memorised projects at the Proms – with the whole ensemble playing without sheet music – have taken their musicians and audiences inside the fabric of repertoire from Beethoven to Shostakovich in new ways. This year, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is a definitive challenge for their memorising collective. I can't wait to see their performances, because the freedom of playing from memory – but freighted with the frisson of needing to get every semiquaver in the right place – points to performances that have a special intensity.

Yet that's also possible in performances in which everyone is reading notes in front of them. At so many first performances in the 18th and 19th centuries, the music had only just been written down. It was so new that it couldn't have been memorised beforehand. That's a vitalising energy that musical culture loses at its peril. If everything had to be memorised, music might only keep repeating itself. Like all the best magic, Liszt's innovation is a richly Faustian musical trick, releasing and constraining at the same time.

*The Aurora Orchestra performs Stravinsky's 'The Rite of Spring' from memory (preceded by a musical-dramatic introduction) this week on Saturday 2 September.*

→ Next week: **Mozart's Requiem**

Join Tom Service on his Proms-themed musical odysseys in *The Listening Service* on BBC Radio 3 during the season (Sundays at 5.00pm, repeated Fridays at 4.30pm). You can hear all 220-plus editions of the series on BBC Sounds. Tom's book based on the series was published last year (Faber).



## Anthony Parnter *conductor*

PROMS DEBUT ARTIST

American conductor Anthony Parnter is now concluding his fourth season as Music Director of California's San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra. As conductor of the Gateways Music Festival

Orchestra, comprising members from leading orchestras nationwide, he led its Carnegie Hall debut, showcasing the world premiere of *I Can* by Jon Batiste.

He has conducted artists ranging from Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Jessye Norman and Frederica von Stade to Imagine Dragons and Rihanna. Forthcoming guest appearances include performances at the Hollywood Bowl, his New York Philharmonic debut and a return to the Philadelphia Orchestra.

A champion of traditionally under-represented voices, he has reconstructed and performed orchestral works by Margaret Bonds, Duke Ellington, Zenobia Powell Perry, Florence Price, William Grant Still and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. He conducted Los Angeles Opera's world premiere of Tamar-kali Brown's oratorio *We Hold These Truths* and Long Beach Opera's revival of Anthony Davis's *Central Park Five*, and has premiered and recorded works by Chanda Dancy, Adolphus Hailstork, Marian Harrison, Phillip Herbert, Daniel Kidane, Gary Powell Nash, James Newton, George Walker, Errollyn Wallen, James Wilson and John Wineglass.

Anthony Parnter's work as a film conductor includes contributions to soundtracks in the *Black Panther*, *Star Wars* and *Avatar* franchises.



## Aaron Azunda Akugbo *trumpet*

PROMS DEBUT ARTIST

Aaron Azunda Akugbo was born in Edinburgh in 1998 and is of Nigerian-Scottish descent. He brings a wide-ranging musical taste to his artistry and cites Louis Armstrong as his biggest musical

inspiration. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music and an ex-principal of The National Youth Orchestra, he plays as guest principal with UK orchestras including the Philharmonia, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Symphony and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras.

He made his London debut in 2020 as part of the Southbank Centre's 'Behind Closed Doors' series, performing Haydn's Trumpet Concerto with the Chineke! Orchestra. Within the orchestra he has played throughout the UK, including its BBC Proms debut in 2017. He made his Wigmore Hall debut playing Saint-Saëns's Septet with members of the orchestra and participated in its European tour, with concerts at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Cologne Philharmonie.

Recent and forthcoming highlights include recitals at St George's Bristol, at the Bath, Glasgow Cathedral and Lichfield festivals and at the Lucerne Festival, where he gave the world premiere of *They know what they've done to us*, composed for him by Joy Guidry. Last year he performed as soloist with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and in March he played Haydn's Trumpet Concerto with the Orchestra of the Swan.

Aaron Azunda Akugbo is a founding member of Connaught Brass. He plays on a combination of Vincent Bach Stradivarius and Scherzer instruments.

## Chineke! Orchestra

Founded in 2015 by double bassist Chi-chi Nwanoku CBE, the Chineke! Foundation strives to transform perceptions in classical music. Comprising four performing groups: the Chineke! Orchestra, Junior Orchestra, Chamber Ensemble and Voices, it is predominantly made up of Black and ethnically diverse musicians and personifies inclusion. Chineke! has opened doors for hundreds of talented musicians, receiving acclaim for the joyous quality of its music-making.

Recent milestones include a North American debut tour in March, a sold-out performance at New York's Lincoln Center and recordings of music by Florence Price, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Avril Coleridge-Taylor. Performing around 40 concerts in the UK annually, the Chineke! Orchestra holds a position as Resident Orchestra at London's Southbank Centre, playing regularly at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Royal Festival Hall.

Every concert sees the Chineke! Orchestra proudly performing works by composers who have been neglected throughout history alongside new commissions from living Black composers.

Chineke!'s vision is far-reaching: in creating the Foundation Nwanoku sought to create an inclusive environment where musicians feel they belong. Its aim is to inspire young Black and ethnically diverse children, give them a platform and show them that music, of whatever kind, is for all people. Chineke!'s influence continues to inspire, broaden and challenge traditional boundaries in the classical music world.

### Founder and Artistic Director

Chi-chi Nwanoku  
CBE

### First Violins

Juan Manuel González Hernández  
*leader*  
Chelsea Sharpe  
Laura Ayoub  
Brammah Kanneh-Mason  
Laetitia Pannetier  
Elodie Chousmer-Howelles  
Blaize Henry  
Soong Choo  
Tom Eisner  
Imaan Kashim  
Robert Miller  
Sydney Mariano  
Teddy Truneh  
Ammal Bhatia

### Second Violins

Robert Olisa Nzekwu  
Steven Crichlow  
Nuno Carapina  
Shona Beecham  
Sasha Scott  
Raye Harvey  
Rebekah Reid  
Leora Cohen  
Angela Antwi-Agyei  
Kourosh Ahmadi  
Laure Chan  
Aaliyah Booker

### Violas

Lena Fankhauser  
Natalia Senior-Brown  
Taha Abedian

Beatrice Slocumbe  
Adyr Francisco  
Nikki Hicks  
Wei Wei Tan  
Alison D'Souza  
Natalia Solis Paredes  
Jesse Francis

### Cellos

Desmond Neysmith  
Laura Anstee  
Tamaki Sugimoto  
David Kadumukasa  
Meera Raja  
Elliott Bailey  
Danushka Edirisinghe  
Josie Campbell

### Double Basses

Chi-chi Nwanoku  
CBE  
Charles Campbell-Peek  
Roberto Carrillo Garcia  
Thea Sayer  
Fabián Galeana  
Telmo Martins

### Flutes

Matthew Higham  
Jaymee Coonjobeeharry  
Deronne White

### Oboes

Titus Underwood  
Esther Williams

**Clarinets**

Anton Clarke-  
Butler

Mebrakh  
Haughton-  
Johnson

**Bassoons**

Joshua Elmore  
Daria Phillips

**Horns**

Lisa Ford  
Derryck Nasib

**Trumpets**

Gabriel Dias  
Cameron Chin-See

**Trombone**

Jake Durham

**Tuba**

Hanna Mbuya

**Timpani**

Paul Philbert MBE

**Percussion**

Sacha Johnson  
Pedro Segundo  
Jason Chowdhury

**Harp**

Ruby Aspinall

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